A LETTER FROM A FRIEND in the NORTH, TO A FRIEND in the WEST, Concerning the ELECTING of Parliament-men.

I have, as you desired me, impartially considered, and duly weighed the several Reasons you offer for the Choice of such Men as you call *Sound Protestants*, but no great Friends to the *Church of England*. And to deal plainly with you, do not find my self thereby at all inclin'd to the Choice of any such Men; but rather am confirm'd in the quite contrary Opinion, and declare sincerely that I think none so fit to serve in this *Parliament*, as the *Sober and Sound Church of England Men*, and that as for other, so not the least, for those very Reasons you in your Letters seem to argue the quite contrary.

First, You say, that it was chiefly upon their account and in favour of the *Church of England*, that the late *Parliament* was so suddenly Prorogued, and afterwards Dissolved: and that the Dissenters did highly resent such Proceedings, with some other unhansome Reflections upon his Majesty. Now supposing the [illegible] of the late Prorogation (which yet you [illegible] certain of, nor will I so much as guess at) in my opinion, this is a sufficient reason, that none are fit to be chosen, but such as are *Sober Church Men*; unless those whom the King (free I hope from all suspicion of Popery, or from having any [illegible] with the late King) hath thought the chief Men, who by their heats and unseasonable divisions in the House, *Retarded* our Affairs and hinder his Majesty from the vigorous Prosecution of the War, for the Reduction of *Ireland*, and thereby down the haughty *French* [illegible] shall be thought the only fit Men to serve in Parliament. Sir, you cannot forget what you and others, so lately discoursed of, declaring the necessity of the speedy and firm uniting of all *Protestants*, and that forgetting all our former animosities, feuds and animosities, fomented by the Papists, we should heartily join with the King against all his Enemies whatsoever, which you is evident can never be done, but by a cordial and full Agreement of the King and Parliament; which is not likely to continue long, if only such Men must [illegible] his Majesty is [illegible] what [illegible] how his Majesty [illegible] and what he

hath done for this Nation and the *Protestant Religion*, is evident to all the World; and not long ago, a little before the last Session, you seem'd highly satisfied in all his Proceedings; nor can I forget what chearful Apprehensions you had of his happy Reign, with hands lift up, thanking God that now we had got a true *Protestant* King, and one that did really design the good of his Subjects, and would never go about to deprive his People of any of their just and legal Privileges. Nor can you (I think) instance in any thing, wherein he seems to have changed his mind, or in the least to deviate from his first Measures of securing the *Protestant Interest*, and making the Nation happy, setting his Heart upon reconciling all our differences, and by all means endeavouring to unite all his *Protestant Subjects*. And is this the Gratitude we owe to the glorious Instrument, of our late great deliverance from *Popery* and *Arbitrary Power*, and do we then to requite his Care, and the many Dangers he already hath and is still ready, to expose his Royal Person to, for our safety, chuse such to serve in his great Councils, as we think are Enemies to that *Church*, which he daily finds, and hath more then once publickly declared the chiefest Support of the *Protestant Cause*? and shall any whom he hath so willingly indulged, and is ready (if it stand with the safety of the Nation) to indulge further, make no other use of their Liberty, then by chusing such to represent them, as are ready to wrest from his Majesty any of his undoubted Prerogatives, or any part of that Regal Power, which by the Laws of this Nation is inherent in the Crown? or shall they refuse to make choice of any *Church of England Men* to serve in *Parliament*, because his Majesty looks upon them as his best Friends, and such as are likely to uphold Monarchy, in all its just and ancient Rights, who yet (let me tell you) are no less careful, then those you recommend, as the only Patriots, to keep it within its due Bounds, and according to the ancient and fundamental Laws of this Nation, which oblige the King to Rule, and the People to Obey in such sort, and no otherwise, then by Law up-

are directed; either therefore you must confess, you are jealous of the King, and dare no longer trust him, as not designing the good of his People, for which you neither have, nor I'm sure can offer the least shew of reason; or else you will wisely make choice of such, as he is likely to agree with, and exclude such Men as you speak of, in that (as you say) it was upon their account chiefly that the Parliament was at first Prorogued, and soon afterwards Dissolved, since where there is the same cause, we in reason, may suspect the same effect.

Secondly, As little am I moved by your second Reasons, That many of the *Church* of *England* Men, are King *James*'s Men, or too great Friends to the Court Party; for as to the first, we cannot dive into Mens hearts and picklock their Thoughts, nor infallibly say who will prove true and who false; but if the Actions of Men are a Rule to judge Men by, I cannot see but that those very Men you recommend as the only fit Men to serve in Parliament, were the only Men that complied with King *James*'s several unjust and illegal Proceedings, and by their several Addresses did promise so to do. And though as you say, some Men of the *Church of England*, are so far King *James*'s Men, as not to take the Oaths of Allegiance to their present Majesties, and that not a few of her Communion, even in Parliament, were against the imposing the said Oaths, and that such Men as you recommend and intend to chuse, were those who chiefly promoted them; yet I doubt not, but that many, nay most of those very Men who scrupled those Oaths, and yet refuse to take them, will prove as quiet and as serviceable in their Places, as any of those who at first set it on foot. And I can assure you that those amongst us, who in Parliament opposed the said Oaths, and some other Things, since they were enacted, have exhorted and perswaded all their Neighbours and Tenants near them, to take the said Oaths, and to live in all loyal and due Obedience to their Majesties: And those who have taken them, who are the greatest part, both by their Purses and by exposing their Persons to

War and Dangers, are as ready and as willing to contribute to the Reduction of *Ireland*, and pulling down the *French*, as any Men whatsoever, though they had wish'd the said Oaths had not been so rigorously impos'd, but that those who were quiet, and were likely so to remain, might have been dealt more favourably with, than I am apt to think was by some Men in that Act design'd. Yea, it remains a Question to this Day, whether the King has got any more Friends by that Act than he had before, *&c.* However, there are Men enough of the Church of *England* who freely took the same Oaths, and will as faithfully keep them, as any of those Persons you endeavour to recommend, and so are not to be rejected upon any such Pretence. As to the other Part of the Objection, their being too great Bigots to the Court Party, not to mention how impartial his Majesty hath been in distributing Places at Court or elsewhere, and how willing many of those you recommend (upon pretence of being Patriots) are to engross all Places of Trust and Profit; I cannot imagine why any Man should be thought unfit to serve his Country, because he is true to his King; as if the Court and the Countries Interest were like the Juglers Glass, wherein the Angel and the Devil by turns went down as soon as the other got up. Indeed where a Prince apparently designs the Subversion of our Government, and the introducing of Arbitrary and Despotical Power, as some of late have endeavour'd: Those who are Favorites and active Courtiers under such Princes, are but justly suspected as Tools to serve his Purpose, and ought not to be entrusted with the Peoples Liberties; but as the Case now stands, the Court, the Camp, and the Country are but one and the same thing, they are all embarqu'd in the same Cause, they have all one common Enemy, and are all equally engaged in one War, and have all the same Interest. Nor will you, I dare say, affirm, that he that is true to the King, is therefore unfit to be his Subjects Representative, in that (and you lately said no less) 'tis evident his Majesty designs the Good and Welfare of his People as

much, I had almost said more than is own, and would make us Happy, if we can but be content to be so. What some peevish Men would have I cannot tell, nay, can they tell themselves? Of so restless a Spirit are some of this Nation, that I think what Q. *Eliz.* said of the Puritans in her Days, is too true of them, *viz.* Such are the restless Spirits of those Factious Men, that no Quiet can be expected from them. How lately have I heard some of that Party you recommend, declare solemnly, that had they but such and such Priviledges granted, were but such and such Laws repeal'd, and were they permitted to serve God in that way, which seem'd best to their Consciences, how happy they should think themselves, how quiet, how peaceable, how content they should live under such a Government? yet when all this, and more is freely granted them, they remain as unsatisfy'd as before, and are still wayward and out of Humor, though they know not at what? Nor should you ask them, could they readily say what would please them, or at least how long. What you add concerning the Carriage of some men in Places of Trust, at the Landing of the late D. of *M.* is nothing to the purpose, since what they then acted was out of Principles of honest and *true English* Loyalty; and had the late King been as true to them as they were to him, they would have had no Cause to repent of what they then so willingly acted. However, whether they that took Commission from a King in possession of the Crown, and as his Subjects, fought against those who oppos'd him, and were by the Supream Authority of the Nation declar'd Rebels; or they, who in Compliance to the same King, sate in open Court with profes'd Papists, and such as had no legal Commission, and who by their several Addresses, did give Thanks, and promised to stand by him, and assist him with their Lives and Fortunes, even then when he was exercising the Dispensing Power, and had declar'd no Person fit for any Office or Employment, who would not uphold his unbounded Sovereignty, thereby robbing his People of their Fundamental Right, be the fitter Men to serve in Parliament,

I leave to you or any sober Protestant to determine. And now perchance you expect I should say something in answer to the old Business you are so large upon, the persecuting Spirit of the Church of *England*. But I thought the last time you and I were together, you had been fully satisfy'd in that Point, and had a good Opinion of the Church of *England*, and laid the Fault where it really was. However, I do not think this any reason to dissuade me from choosing such Men at this time, since I do not believe they will ever go about to trouble the Dissenters; nor am I acquainted with any sober Church of *England* Man, that is at all displeased with that Liberty which Authority hath been pleased to allow them, unless it be for this reason, that you and others are so forward to chuse them to serve in Parliament, which, in plain terms, is not Persecution, but the Preservation of our antient Government by Kings and Queens. And I am sure no sober Church of *England* Man thinks much that Men are suffer'd to enjoy their Consciences, and have distinct and separate Meetings, till they can be convinced of the Truth of what is taught and practised in this Church; but yet they are not willing that Men be permitted to undermine the Government, pull down Episcopacy, or deprive them of their antient Right of Sitting and Voting as Peers of the Realm, and which will be the next Work, of rendring the Monarch unsafe, or at least so to fetter and shackle him, as he shall be unable to help us, or defend himself; And assure your self, 'tis upon this account, and not from any Spirit of Persecution, or a Desire of depriving the Dissenters of any just and safe Liberty; that we endeavour to choose such Men as are of the Church of *England*'s Communion. I had thought to have added some Reasons which induce us to make choice of such men as are no Enemies to the establish'd Religion, but I see I have already exceeded the Bounds of an Epistle, and so will only add three or four Queries, which if you duly and impartially consider, I hope you will change your Opinion; and both in point of Prudence and Interest, and as an Argument of that Trust and Confi-

dence you justly repose in his Sacred Majesty, you will perswade all in your Parts, to make choice of such as are Friends, or at least no profess'd Enemies to the Church of *England*: who happily agreeing with his Majesty, you and I may in a short time, to the bearing down our Foes, the putting an end to the Expence and Charge we at present are necessarily at, the removing all our Fears and Jealousies, and settling the Kingdom in a firm and lasting Peace.

Q. 1. *Whether the King is not tyd by his Coronation Oath, to maintain and uphold the Church of* England, *as by Law establish'd?*

Q. 2. *Whether a Disagreement between the King and Parliament be not of dangerous Consequence, advancing the* French *and Popish Interest, and tending to the utter Ruine of the Protestant Religion?*

Q. 3. *Whether the choosing such Men for Members to serve in this Parliament, as are Enemies to that Church which his Majesty by Oaths the chiefest Support of the Protestant Church, and which by both often, and lately declared to stand by, be not a probable yea, an inevitable Way to beget such a fatal Disagreement?*

Q. 4. *Whether they that endeavour to choose such Men, must not answer to God for all the Evils and Mischiefs which will be the unavoidable Consequence of such a Disagreement?*

In return to your pious Wishes, I beseech God to open our Eyes, that we may at this Day discern the Things that belong to our Peace, that through Passion or Prejudice they may no longer be hid from us, which shall be the constant Prayer of

Your, &c. to command.

FINIS.